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ENG 2705-001: African American Literature

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Eastern Illinois University

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Michael Loudon
 English 2705.001 MWF 1000-1050 CH2120 (202)
 Fall 2003

Office Hours:
 MTWR 11-12
 or by appointment

African American Literature

Description: This course provides an overview of African-American literature, using selected representative texts of fiction, poetry and drama. We shall begin with a brief consideration of the oral tradition and slave narratives, then we shall move rapidly to the reading of several modern and contemporary authors. While I shall introduce primary literary concerns and suggest issues of thematic consequence, class discussions will determine the direction of our analytical focus from text to text. Finally, one central course objective will be to discover and to define the patterns that constitute the development of a cohesive literary tradition that is rich in cultural heritage and diverse in literary innovation. The course format will be lecture and discussion.

Prerequisite and Electronic Writing Portfolio Submissions: Students must have completed English 1002G or its equivalent before enrolling in ENG 2705, a "writing intensive" course. Sophomores and juniors may elect to submit an essay from ENG 2705 to their portfolios.

Requirements: These are: two six-to-eight-page essays (40%); a midterm essay examination (15%); a final essay examination (25%); and, active preparation and participation in the course (20%).

Required texts:

James Baldwin, *Go Tell it on the Mountain*
 Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man*
 H. L. Gates, Jr., ed., *The Norton Anthology of African-American Literature*
 Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*
 Toni Morrison, *Song of Solomon*

Reserve materials: (Booth Library)

Copies of the *Audio Companion* for the Norton anthology are on reserve.

Office Hours: Michael Loudon Phone: 6312 Office: CH3361(314D)
 cfmdl@eiu.edu; MTWR 11:00-12:00 or by appointment

General Policies:

Grading Standards: I shall follow the EIU English Department Guidelines, distributed in class. In all cases, I shall use a plus and minus system to distinguish, say, a high B from a low one.

Attendance: I do take roll, and I evaluate attendance only indirectly in the context of your participation in the course.

Conferences: These are at your request unless I ask to see you. Please ask for help as soon as you feel you need it; please don't wait until the last couple of weeks of class.

Submission of work: Essays should be typed, double-spaced, on one side of the paper only, titled and indicate the following: name, date, course and section number. Exercises and quizzes must be legible.

Late Essays: For each day that the essay is late, the letter grade will fall by one full grade: an A essay due on Friday will be an F by the next Thursday. If there are particular difficulties, please see me.

Plagiarism: The English Department Policy

Any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism--"The appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and/or thoughts of another author, and the representation of them as one's own original work" (*Random House Dictionary of the English Language*)--has the right and the responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty, up to and including immediate assignment of a grade of F for the course, and to report the incident to the Judicial Affairs Office.

Information for students with disabilities:

If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Coordinator of the Office of Student Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible.

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2705-001

African American Literature: Course Syllabus

August

M 25: Course introduction
W 27: African American literature and the literary canon ("Preface")
F 29: The Vernacular Tradition (1-69)
(All page numbers are from *The Norton Anthology*...unless otherwise noted. Read the introductory prose and scan the songs from the *Audio Companion*. Read all prefaces to the individual authors.)

September

M 1: Labor Day-no class
W 3: (continued)
F 5: **Slavery and Freedom** (127-136)
Frederick Douglass, *Narrative*... (302-369)

M 8: (continued)
W 10: (continued)
F 12: (continued)

M 15: Frederick Douglass, "What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?" (379-391)
W 17: **Reconstruction** (461-472)
Booker T. Washington, *Up from Slavery* (488-521)
F 19: (continued)

M 22: W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (613-740; selections TBA for class discussion)
W 24: (continued)
F 26: (continued) **Essay #1 assigned**

M 29: **Harlem Renaissance** (929-936)
Schomburg (937-942); Locke (960-970); Garvey (972-980)

October

W 1: McKay (981-996)
F 3: (continued)

M 6: Zora Neale Hurston, (996-999; 1019-1041)
W 8: (continued) *Their Eyes Were Watching God*
F 10: (continued) **Take-home midterm examination assigned**

M 13: (continued)
W 15: (continued) **Take-home midterm examination DUE**
F 17: **No class-EIU Fall Break**

M 20: Jean Toomer, *Cane* (1087-1170)
W 22: (continued)
F 24: Schuyler (1170-1174); Hughes (1251-1271) **Essay #1 DUE**

M 27: Countee Cullen (1303-1315)
W 29: Brown (1210-1226); video *Lightin Hopkins*
F 31: Blues (22-36); *Audio Companion* #11-15 (on reserve) **Essay #2 assigned**

November

M 3: **Realism, Naturalism, Modernism** (1319-1328)
Richard Wright (1376-1396)
W 5: Wright (1414-1450); Robert Hayden (1497-1515)
F 7: No class-presentation at Midwest Modern Language Association conference

November

M 10: Gwendolyn Brooks (1577-1596)
W 12: Ralph Ellison (1515-1518; 1541-1571)
F 14: Ellison, *Invisible Man*

M 17: (continued)
W 19: (continued)
F 21: James Baldwin (1650-1670); "Sonny's Blues" (1694-1719)

Thanksgiving Recess

December

M 1: James Baldwin, *Go Tell it on the Mountain*
W 3: (continued)
F 5: **Black Arts Movement** (1791-1806)
Mari Evans (1806-1807), "I Am a Black Woman" (1808)
Hoyt Fuller (1809-1816), "Towards a Black Aesthetic"
Etheridge Knight (1866-1869), all three poems
Addison Gayle, Jr. (1869-1877), "The Black Aesthetic"
Amiri Baraka (1877-1879), "Black Art" (1883-1884)
Sonia Sanchez (1902-1903), from *A Blues Book for Blue Black*
Magical Women (1905-1906)
Haki Madhubuti (1977-1982), all poems

Read the above but especially see:

Larry Neal (1959-1972), "The Black Arts Movement"
Maulana Karenga, (1972-1977), "Black Art: Mute Matter Given Force and Function"

M 8: Toni Morrison, *Song of Solomon*
W 10: (continued)
F 12: (continued) **Essay #2 DUE**

Final examination: Monday, December 15, 10:15-12:15 pm